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8. (Amended) An audio conferencing system comprising:

a plurality of network interface cards connected by a first bus to a host and connected by a second bus to a plurality of digital signal processing units, and further connected to one or more telecommunications lines, each digital signal processing unit comprising a plurality of digital signal processing resources configured to manage channels in one or more audio conferences associated with one or more of the telecommunications lines, and each digital signal processing unit including a processor connected in a communicating relationship with the host and connected in a communicating relationship with the digital signal processing resources of the digital signal processing unit, each digital signal processing unit further including a memory, the memory storing state information relating to one or more audio conferences and the memory connected in a communicating relationship with the host, and each digital signal processing unit further including a switch for selectively coupling the digital signal processing resources of the digital signal processing unit to the second bus, the host accessing the processor, memory, and switch of one or more of the digital signal processing units to dynamically assign digital signal processing resources to one or more conferences present within the audio conferencing system.

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12. (Amended) The method of claim 10, comprising:

establishing a link line from the first resource to the second resource; and transmitting data from the first resource to the second resource.

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15. (Amended) The method of claim 12 further comprising transmitting data from the second resource to the first resource.

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17. (Amended) The method of claim 12 wherein the data includes state data for one or more of the one or more lines or conferencing resources.

18. (Amended) The method of claim 1, comprising:

determining a switch delay indicative of a delay for switching a line from a source resource to a target resource;

buffering audio data for a line from the source resource at the target resource for an amount of time at least as great as the switch delay, the audio data including talk data for the line;

transferring conference data for the line from the source resource to the target resource, the conference data including state data for the line;

switching the line from the source resource to the target resource; and

using the buffered audio data to maintain audio continuity while switching the line.

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19. (Amended) A method for managing audio conferencing resources comprising:
detecting a loss of a first physical resource, the first physical resource being a resource for conducting at least one audio conference;

identifying one or more audio conferences of the at least one audio conference associated with the first physical resource;

identifying a second physical resource, the second physical resource being a resource for conducting at least one audio conference, and the second physical resource having a capacity for the one or more conferences; and

allocating the one or more conferences to the second physical resource.

20. (Amended) The method of claim 19 wherein the loss is due to at least one of a power failure or a component failure.

21. (Amended) The method of claim 19 wherein the loss is due to an intentional removal of a resource.

22. (Amended) The method of claim 19 further comprising repeating the steps of detecting a loss, identifying one or more audio conferences associated with the first physical resource, identifying a second physical resource and allocating the one or more conferences to the second physical resource continuously.

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23. (Amended) The method of claim 1, comprising:
detecting a loss of another resource;

identifying one or more lines of an audio conference associated with the other resource; and
allocating the one or more lines to one of the first or second resources.

24. (Amended) The audio conferencing system of claim 9, wherein:

each of the plurality of network interface cards couples one or more lines to the time-slot interchange bus using fixed time slots, the switch operable under control of the host to couple with one or more predetermined time slots of the time-slot interchange bus; and

a local time-slot interchange bus, the local bus transmitting data among the digital signal processing resources and the switch,

whereby any one of the one or more lines can communicate with any one of the digital signal processing resources and whereby a time slot associated with the line on the time-slot interchange bus is maintained.

REMARKS

This Amendment and Response is filed in reply to the Office Action dated November 29, 2001. The issues presented in the November 29, 2001 Office Action are addressed below with reference to the numbered paragraphs in the Office Action.

With regard to the Office Action, paragraph 1: The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, 4-7, 10-13, 15-17, and 19-23 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b), as being anticipated by Shaffer, et al. (reference L, EPO 0 805 582).

With regard to the Office Action paragraph 2: The Examiner has rejected claims 3, 8, 9, 14, and 24 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shaffer, et al. and has rejected claim 18 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shaffer et al. in view of Wagner et al. (reference C, U.S. Patent No. 5,761,292).

The rejections are respectfully traversed.

Shaffer et al. do not teach or suggest moving conferences among resources. Rather, Shaffer et al. appear to teach reconfiguring conference call connectivity among